AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1– 27. (Cancelled)

28. (New) A method in a local device of enabling a remote device to initiate a traffic flow with a local device, comprising:

sending an initial null message addressed to the remote device wherein when the local device is located behind a network address translator, the network address translator intercepts the initial null message and establishes an address translation between the remote device and the local device and when the local device is not behind a network address translator the initial null message is forwarded to the remote device; and

receiving a message from the remote device wherein when the local device is located behind the network address translator, the network address translator receives the message and performs address translation based on the established address translation;

wherein the local device operates independently of whether it is located behind a network address translator.

29. (New) The method of claim 28 wherein, when the local device is located behind the network address translator, the network address translator discards the initial null message after establishing the address translation.

30. (New) The method of claim 28, further comprising:
setting a timer when sending the initial null message;
upon expiration of the timer, sending a follow-up null message to the remote device.

31. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein a delay of the timer depends upon a type of communications protocol used in sending an initial null message.

32.   (New) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

before sending an initial null message, discovering the remote device as a device with which the local device wishes to communicate.

33.   (New) The method of claim 32, wherein discovering the remote device comprises identifying the remote device and identifying a type of communication in which the local device wishes to participate.

34.   (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the network address translator chooses a port number, associates the chosen port number with the initial null message, and communicates the chosen port number to the remote device;

35.   (New) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

setting a timer when sending the initial null message;

upon expiration of the timer, choosing a second port number, associating the second chosen port number with a follow-up null message, communicating the second chosen port number to the remote device, and sending the follow-up null message to the remote device.

36.   (New) The method of claim 28 wherein the initial null message includes a first port number and the local device communicates the first port number to the remote device.

37.   (New) The method of claim 36 wherein when a message is not received from the remote device after a delay, the local device sends another null message that includes a second port number and communicates the second port number to the remote device.

38.   (New) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a local device to enable a remote device to initiate a traffic flow with the local device, by a method comprising:

sending to the remote device an initial message with content that can be disregarded by the remote device so that a network address translator can establish an address translation; and

receiving a message from the remote device that is not in response to the initial message wherein the network address translator receives the message and performs address translation based on the established address translation

wherein the local device operates independently of whether it is located behind a network address translator.

39.   (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein when the local device is located behind the network address translator, the network address translator discards the initial message.

40.   (New)   The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein the initial message includes a first port number and further comprising:

setting a timer when sending the initial message;

upon expiration of the timer, sending a follow-up message with a second port number to the remote device.

41.   (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 40 wherein the local device randomly selects the second port number.

42.   (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 38, further comprising:

before sending an initial message, discovering a public address of the remote device.